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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, August 20, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Canned Milk." Information from the Consumers' Counsel and the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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The depression has had a decided effect on the sale of most milk products all over the country. That's what the food studies which the Department of Agriculture has been making show. When the family pocketbook grew thin, people just got along with less milk, cream, butter, cheese and so on. But one milk product has been affected in the opposite way. This is evaporated milk. The sale of evaporated milk has increased 85% since 1929 -- increased to the huge figure of a billion and a half pounds in 1933. If you divide that amount by the population of this country, you'll see that this allows an average of 10 pounds of evaporated milk for every one of us in 1933.

Of course, there's a reason why the sale of evaporated milk went up when the sale of other milk products went down. The reason is price. While pocketbooks were shrinking, the price of a can of evaporated milk was shrinking, too---going down to a figure way below the cost of fresh milk in city markets.

Now, if you look over that little household account book you kept so carefully back in the fatal year of 1929, and compare the price of evaporated milk then and now, you'll quickly see how the price has gone down. The sizes of cans have changed to be sure. The regular "tall cans" used to hold 16 ounces; now they hold only 14 and 1/2 ounces. Still, if you figure it out, you'll see that the amount of evaporated milk that cost, say, 11 and 1/2 cents in 1929 costs only 8 cents in 1934.

This is fortunate for the housewife who buys evaporated milk, but it isn't so happy for the farmer. To make the cut in the price of canned milk possible, he had to take a cut of 50% in his price for the fresh milk he sold for evaporating. Fortunately, the Secretary of Agriculture and the manufacturers of evaporated milk made a marketing agreement last September which is now being revised so that the farmers will receive more money.

Well, here are some facts about this milk product that the depression didn't depress. You perhaps have often wondered just what evaporated milk is. Well, it is milk minus over half its water -- "cooked down," so to speak, so that over half the water has evaporated. And it is sterilized, so that it contains no bacteria to cause spoilage. You'll be glad to know that all evaporated milk has to conform to government grade standards. These standards are rather technical, but you may be interested in them just the same. The government specifies that all evaporated milk shall contain not less than 7.8% of milk fat nor less than 25.5% of milk solids, or not less than a total of 33.7% for both. You'll also be glad to know that the government insists that the label shall state exactly the amount of milk in the can.



If you dilute a "tall can" of evaporated milk, which holds  $14\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, with an equal amount of water, you won't have the equivalent of a quart of fresh milk, but you will have a little over  $3\frac{1}{3}$  cups of milk -- about  $\frac{5}{6}$  of a quart. Specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics say that to make the equivalent of a quart of whole milk you must have 17 ounces of evaporated milk and 17 ounces of water.

Well, so much for figures. Now about the process of evaporating milk. Did you ever try "boiling down" a quart of fresh whole milk until you had about a pint left? Well, the result would be about what is in a can of evaporated milk, but it would probably be scorched, partly coagulated, and would probably also have a scum on top. To make the kind of product you can buy at the grocery, the milk has to cook quickly yet at low temperature. For this the manufacturers use vacuum pans, which cook the milk in a vacuum so it neither scorches nor coagulates. This process also preserves some of the vitamins that would be lost in cooking in an open kettle.

Perhaps you have noticed that the cream doesn't rise to the surface of a can of condensed milk as it does in the fresh whole milk in a bottle. This is because in the process of making evaporated milk, the fat is broken up so that it is distributed through the milk instead of rising to the top. After evaporating, the milk is poured into the can through a hole not much larger than the lead in a lead pencil. The manufacturers then seal the hole with a drop of solder, which makes it air-tight. An unopened can keeps indefinitely, but once opened, it spoils just as fresh milk does, so you can't keep it long, and while you keep it, it must be in a cold place like a refrigerator.

After the can of milk has been soldered air-tight, it goes into a sterilizer to destroy any bacteria which may have remained in the can. The heat of sterilizing gives milk that "evaporated taste," which is so different from the flavor of whole milk. Many people inquire about this taste. Some have had an idea it came from some preservative put in the milk. Not at all. It is simply caused by heating.

Be sure not to confuse the two kinds of canned milk -- evaporated and condensed. Condensed milk contains sugar. Government standards will also protect you on this sweetened form of canned milk.

That reminds me of a very nice and easy dessert which you can make from this condensed milk -- a dessert that seems like a sweet caramel jelly, golden brown in color. Set the can of sweetened milk, unopened, in a kettle of boiling water -- enough water to cover it. And boil for three hours. Remove the can and chill it. Then open and slice the jelled product inside. Serve each slice with a spoonful of whipped cream. You can boil several cans at the same time and store away in the refrigerator ready for a last-minute dessert.

But to get back to evaporated milk. Mothers often ask about its food value. Does evaporated milk contain the same food value as fresh milk -- the same vitamins and minerals, for example? The scientists say that the heating





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process destroys some of the vitamins, but evaporated milk is still a good source of vitamins A and G, the two in which milk is especially rich. The evaporating process doesn't affect the minerals that make milk so valuable -- the calcium, for example, and the phosphorus.

Now about using canned milk to feed the baby. Evaporated milk is often most successful in infant feeding. The heating during the process of evaporation changes the protein so that it forms soft, fluffy curds in the stomach, and this is an aid to digestion. The evaporating process also breaks up the fat -- another aid to digestion. But the sweetened form of canned milk -- condensed milk -- contains so much sugar that no mother should give it to her baby except when a physician recommends it.

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